

Displaced Children and Orphans Fund: Zambia

Africa Kidsafe Alliance for Street Children

Implementing Partner: Project Concern International (PCI)

Funding Period: Dec. 2004 – Dec. 2007

Amount: \$1,715,782

Purpose: Consolidate and expand a safety net of NGO and community-based organizations that can effectively meet the immediate and long-term needs of children living on the street and otherwise vulnerable.

Accomplishments:

- § By June 2005, a total of 1,396 women were actively participating in activities aimed at empowering families organized by Africa Kidsafe Alliance partner organizations.
- § Monthly household food distributions were being provided by partners to 1,223 particularly vulnerable households.
- § A total of 386 children (including 51 girls) living in partners' residential programs were benefiting from a minimum package of basic services, including shelter, psychosocial support, food, basic medical care, education, and recreation.
- § A total of 2,108 children were participating in school feeding programs run by partners.
- § Some 1,400 children had received basic medical care, either through clinics established at implementing partner centers, or through referrals to government or private clinics.
- § Partners had enrolled 1,744 street and at-risk children in community and government schools.
- § A total of 119 families of street children were traced and 24 children were reintegrated into their families.

Zambia has one of the highest proportions of orphaned children in the world, an estimated 19 percent—fueled, in part, by the country's staggering HIV rates. Nearly one in five people ages 15 to 49 is infected with HIV, and more than 300 people die each day from AIDS-related causes. In some areas, up to 75 percent of households care for children other than their own. Extended families—the traditional caregivers for orphaned children—have been hit hard by HIV/AIDS, as well as extreme poverty, and are often stretched beyond their capacity to help.

These factors push many children to the street in search of ways to support themselves, their siblings, or their families. Tens of thousands of children are on the streets of Lusaka alone, and the number is expected to grow steadily over the next ten years. About three-quarters of the children found living or spending time on the street are no longer attending school, and more than one-third have never been to school. The life opportunities for these children are extremely limited; their future security is seriously jeopardized; and a cycle of poverty and vulnerability is perpetuated.

On the streets, these children face physical, sexual abuse, violence, exposure to drugs, poor health, and psychological distress. Tragically, children orphaned by AIDS often become infected with HIV themselves, as their street life exposes them to high-risk behavior.

In December 2004, the USAID's Displaced Children and Orphans Fund launched Africa KidSAFE Alliance for Street Children, a network of local nongovernmental and community-based organizations. The network has begun in Lusaka and will be expanded to include partners in other major urban centers, including Livingston, Ndola, Kitwe. By June 2005, 11 organizations had become partners in the network. The project aims to reduce the movement of at-risk children to the streets by increasing families' care giving capacity. It is also enabling children on the street to reintegrate in their families and communities, meeting basic needs of children on the street, and building the capacity of local NGOs to implement and sustain effective programs for children on or at risk of moving onto the street.